This Master of Science in Strategic Brand Communication (MS SBC) degree is an online program jointly sponsored by the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising in the College of Media and the Department of Business Administration in the Gies College of Business. The degree program launched in December 2016 and graduates from this program receive the MS SBC degree awarded by the Graduate College. Strategic Brand Communication (SBC) is a data-driven, purposeful conversation with a brand’s stakeholders. SBC combines traditional advertising practices with contemporary business thinking that pertains to delivering consistent, meaningful messages to consumers. In so doing, SBC seeks to integrate multiple consumer contact points that occur through the purchase of commercial messages in paid, earned, and owned media to deliver persuasive and impactful statements about brands and companies.

This management process integrates all aspects of strategic brand marketing communications such as advertising, public relations, digital media, social media, promotion, and revenue development marketing. Such integration impacts a firm’s business-to-business, marketing channel, customer-focused, and strategic integrated communications.

The MS SBC degree program is designed for working professionals. The proposed online program is designed to be completed in 15 months. The curriculum will prepare students to: be strategic leaders in an ever-changing global media environment; be analytic and integrative thinkers; be effective brand communicators and managers; respond agilely to new technologies, emerging media, new demographics, and market trends; be team-oriented in their approach to management and communications; and be prepared to continue to learn as the media environment evolves.

To be admitted into this program, applicants are expected to have a minimum grade point average of at least 3.0 (A = 4.00) for the last two years of undergraduate study and a 3.0 for any previous graduate work completed. All applicants whose native language is not English must submit a minimum Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of at least 102 (iBT), 253 (CBT), or 610 (PBT); or minimum International English Language Testing System (IELTS) academic exam scores of 6.5 overall and 6.0 in all subsections. Prerequisite: course in Statistics or Calculus from an accredited institution. The admissions criteria will be based upon an evaluation of each applicant’s academic and professional experience, GPA, English aptitude, and letters of recommendation.

A minimum GPA of 2.75 is required for continued enrollment.

### Courses

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBC 500</td>
<td>Strategic Brand Communication Essentials</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBC 501</td>
<td>Strategic Branding: Global Perspectives</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBC 502</td>
<td>Essentials of Business Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBC 503</td>
<td>Consumer Insights I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The course explores how cultural, sociological and psychological factors shape consumer behavior. It will provide an overview of the key concepts of the discipline of consumer behavior and enable students to put into practice the new found understanding of consumer behavior to shape branding strategies. 3 graduate hours. No professional credit. Approved for Letter and S/U grading. Prerequisite: Restricted to MS: SBC students.

### Minimum GPA

A minimum GPA of 2.75 is required for continued enrollment.
SBC 504 Managing Projects & Teams  credit: 3 Hours. (https://courses.illinois.edu/schedule/terms/SBC/504)
Successful Strategic Brand Communication requires working on a series of projects. This course provides a socio-technical perspective to the management of projects. The technical dimensions deal with needs analysis, work breakdown, scheduling, resource allocation, risk management, and performance tracking and evaluation - within the allocated time frame and cost. The sociocultural dimensions include attributes of sound leadership, formation and management of teams, and managing customer expectations in order to formulate consistent, integrated campaigns across channels. 3 graduate hours. No professional credit. Approved for Letter and S/U grading. Prerequisite: Restricted to MS: SBC students.

SBC 505 Consumer Insights II  credit: 3 Hours. (https://courses.illinois.edu/schedule/terms/SBC/505)
The course will provide an overview of the key qualitative methods used to gain strategic insights into consumer behavior and to provide practice in planning research projects, data collection, and analysis. 3 graduate hours. No professional credit. Approved for Letter and S/U grading. Prerequisite: Restricted to MS: SBC students.

SBC 506 Measurement and Evaluation  credit: 3 Hours. (https://courses.illinois.edu/schedule/terms/SBC/506)
This course will focus on the method and analysis for consumer insights but also for measuring effectiveness of various promotional strategies and campaign effectiveness. This includes an overview of quantitative research methods with emphasis on analysis and interpretation of data, and application to evaluating effectiveness of promotional strategies. 3 graduate hours. No professional credit.

SBC 507 Promotional Strategy  credit: 3 Hours. (https://courses.illinois.edu/schedule/terms/SBC/507)
This course will familiarize students with the topic of marketing communications and promotion management, and will teach students the steps for strategically planning a strategic brand communications campaign. The culmination of this course will be a campaign for a real-world client. 3 graduate hours. No professional credit.

SBC 508 Messaging Strategy  credit: 3 Hours. (https://courses.illinois.edu/schedule/terms/SBC/508)
Creating and executing successful messages across communication channels. Explores the development of persuasive messaging through theories of persuasion, consumer-information processing and theories of creativity. The course examines the relationship between creative strategy and creative executions while allowing students to practice creating content for traditional and non-traditional media. Strategic brand communication manages every message and contact point within an organization. Audiences include not only consumers, but employees, stockholders, the media, and others. 3 graduate hours. No professional credit. Prerequisite: SBC 507.

SBC 509 Strategic Media Management  credit: 3 Hours. (https://courses.illinois.edu/schedule/terms/SBC/509)
Analyzes the markets served by various advertising media and factors to consider in the selection and evaluation of media. Markets include investors, employees, and consumer segments. This course will also cover managing media in a global context. This course is designed to provide students with an advanced understanding of media analysis, planning, buying and optimization. 3 graduate hours. No professional credit. Prerequisite: SBC 502, SBC 507. Restricted to MS: SBC students.